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ABSTRACT

This biography reviews the life of Robert Maynard Hutchins, a leader in higher education in the 20th century, by a long-time friend and colleague. The biography first follows Hutchins' story from his origins as a preacher's son in rural Ohio to Oberlin College, through early success at the Yale Law school where he reformed legal education and influenced the practice of law. Most of the book is about his long tenure as president of the University of Chicago which encompassed university educational reform, establishment of the "Great Books" curriculum and a national Great Books enthusiasm, the McCarthy hearings on communists, World War II, and the development of the atomic bomb. The book then documents Hutchins' activities following the war which emphasized working for peace and social change and a world community. Later in life he settled in Santa Barbara, California and started the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. The narrative focuses throughout on Hutchins as a personality, a reformer and a thinker. His broad influence on various aspects of university and public life are emphasized and his shortcomings, failures and obstacles are also included. Notes accompany each chapter. An index is also included. (JB)

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